DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SECTION

799 E. Rialto Avenue, San Bernardino, CA. 92415-0011

IMMUNIZATION 1-800-722-4794......Fax (909) 386-8325 TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL 1-800-722-4794......Fax (909) 387-2861 EPIDEMIOLOGY 1-800-722-4794.....Fax (909) 386-8325 TRUDY RAYMUNDO Public Health Director

MAXWELL OHIKHUARE, M.D. Health Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 23, 2012 NR # 12-52 CONTACT: Maxwell Ohikhuare, MD
Health Officer

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FIRST HUMAN DEATH FROM WEST NILE VIRUS IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

San Bernardino. The County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health has confirmed the first human death from West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2012. A total of 19 symptomatic human WNV cases have been confirmed in 2012 so far.

"We are greatly saddened by this death that has occurred in San Bernardino County. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family. We continue to see an increase of WNV activity throughout the County and therefore, we strongly encourage that the public takes appropriate precautionary measures to protect themselves against mosquito bites," said Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D., San Bernardino County Health Officer. "People over 50 years old should be especially cautious, as they are more likely to develop serious illness if they contract the virus."

WNV is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito that has fed on an infected bird. Signs and symptoms of WNV may include fever, body aches, rash, nausea, vomiting and headache. Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms; however, some people may develop severe symptoms which can lead to brain inflammation or paralysis.

San Bernardino County citizens can protect themselves from mosquito bites by taking the following precautions:

- 1) **DAWN** and **DUSK** Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active.
- 2) **DRESS** Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts that are loose fitting and light colored.
- DRAIN Remove or drain all standing water around your property where mosquitoes lay eggs such as birdbaths, ponds, old tires, buckets, clogged gutters or puddles from leaky sprinklers.
- 4) **DEET** Apply insect repellent containing DEET. When using DEET, be sure to read and follow the label instructions.
- 5) **DOORS** Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home.

We encourage the public to participate in the West Nile Virus surveillance program by reporting dead birds to the State West Nile Virus toll-free hotline at (877) WNV – BIRD (968-2473) or on-line at www.westnile.ca.gov.

For more information on West Nile Virus, please visit the San Bernardino County Mosquito and Vector Control Program www.sbcounty.gov/dehs, or call the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health Communicable Disease Section at 1 (800) 722-4794, Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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JOSIE GONZALES, CHAIR.....Fifth District